Ethiopian Corridor Development and Legality

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1. About the project

Ethiopia is one of developing countries building different projects with participation of the people. These projects aimed to modernize the country, to distribute infrastructures, to boost economic level and to link regional stats one another and with the federal states. Planning to join top economically powerful countries of Africa, Ethiopia is building great dams, hospitals, airports, telecom and power installation, road and school.[1] Every project is built on the land, which is either taken from individual holders or the government land. Now a day corridor is the new project launched in 2023 by the capital of Addis Ababa, Mayer Adanech Abebe. And many cities and towns joined the corridor project to rebuild infra structures and personal buildings. By now almost above 70 cities and towns are implementing corridor project. Not only cities the rural part is working on corridor projects to promote cultural or traditional land governance. The main goals of rural corridor developments is to reduce poverty, improve living standard and promoting sustainable development.[2] The rural corridor is launched to uplift the livelihoods of farming community.[3] to uplift the li uplift the livelihoods of farming communities

Corridor development is a strategic plan building, and operation of transportation infrastructures that connect key areas in the city.[4] The reason to design and implement corridor project is based on the study which reveals, more than 70 percent of the cities are under standard and houses or buildings need to be rebuilt by participation of the community.[5] Due to corridor project estimated

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[1] One of the biggest project is 7.8 billion dollar project of bishoftu airport. Ethiopia Unveils $7.8 Billion Mega Airport in Bishoftu: A Game Changer for African Aviation - Addis Insight

[2] Addi zemenen Gazette ‘rural corridor development initiative to transform lives. June 8, 2025 Rural corridor development initiative to transform lives – Ethiopian Press Agency

[3] Ethiopian news agency (2023) Rural Corridor Initiative Launched to Uplift the Livelihood of the Community https://www.ena.et/web/eng/social

[4] Mulugeta Girma and Zelalem Mulatu ‘Evaluating corridor development initiatives and their effects in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia’ vol.13 [1] mar 4 2025 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21650020.2025.247399

[5] Reporter "በኮሪደር ልማቱ ላይ የሚነሱ ጥያቄዎች"/ questions on corridor’/ Amharic/ published February 2/2023

to hundred thousands were evacuated from their work place and homes. The holders have lost their income source and the land without any compensation, even they contribute for corridor development project. In Addis Ababa, Piyasa 48 k.m. road is rebuilt expending 33 billion birr. Second round development planned to rebuild 132 k.m. road in Addis Ababa and the project successfully end by 2024. The project has re building damaged buildings, broadening asphalt road, cleaning riversides and building recreation areas.[6]

2. The conflicting positions towards corridor development

There are two arguments or positions regarding corridor projects among Ethiopian peoples. The first one is agents corridor raising, there are many problems which we need to focus and priorities like re-building the northern Amhara and Tigray region projects destroyed by internal conflict. In addition it's a disappointment for the people who are affected with and violation of the law to implement corridor without paying compensation. The second position is supporters of the project considering modernizing the city, the project will maintain flood affected areas[7], it makes the environment more conducive for the community by decreasing traffic congestion and including new design for bicycle riders.[8] It boost the city image.

3. The Issue of Public Purpose

The term public interest is one of argumentative issue until expropriation of land holding for public purpose and payment of compensation proclamation no 1161/2019 was enacted. The constitution under article 40 /8/ stipulates that the government may expropriate private property for public purpose with payment of compensation commensurate to value of property.[9] The same law under article 44/2/ provides rights of person displaced or whose right is adversely affected due to government programs to be compensated. The constitution is not clear about the essence of the term public purpose. The proclamation under article 2 it provides definition. Accordingly, 'public interest' is defined as when the relevant authority decides based on land use plan or development plan or structural plan under the belief that land use will directly or indirectly bring better economic and social development to the public. The definition has three basic elements. First, decision by

[6] Docevele, Corridor development challenges and out coms' amharic "የኮሪደር ልማቱ ጡጤትና ተግዳሮት" DW| *Africa* published June 13, 2024 https://www.dw.com/am/
[7] Infra note 5
[8] Infra note 4
[9] The constitution of Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation no 1/1995

relevant authority or cabinet of Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa or regional states. Second, it must be based on plan and finally there must be a belief that the project will bring economic or social development for the public. When the project passed those three conditions it can be implemented as a public purpose project. And the proclamation provides under that anybody whose interest is affected shall be compensated for loss of income, property, resettlement, break up for social ties and displacement.

4. Legality of Corridor Development

As I have highlight in preceding sections of this article, Ethiopia initiates and enter in to implementation of corridor project by 2023-2024. Many roads and cities are decorated and built with designs of corridor. The project development was participatory, many has contributed for construction. But the problem is none has payed compensated for the loss. No one raised a claim for compensation. In Jimma city more than forty thousands were affected by the project, yet they didn't claim compensation. The project is being implemented without payment of compensation. The constitution also provides duty of the government under economic objective article 89/6/ that to hold the land and natural resource on behalf of the people and to deploy the resource for common benefit and development. When we analyze those constitutional provisions the government is exercising its power bestowed by the law.

On the other hand the provisions of constitution article 40/8/ and article 44/2/ stipulates the right of those who are affected by projects and programs of development should be compensated. In addition the expropriation proclamation is enacted to govern payment of compensation when there is expropriation for public purpose. When we see international instruments property right is protected under universal declaration of human right article 17.[10] Everyone has the right to property and the property cannot be deprived of arbitrarily.

So, how this legal rights and duty of government can be reconciled is the basic issue which need lawyers and policy makers to deal with. Though many of the people affected by the project has been willfully accepted the damage and property loss, and even they give their consent to the holding to be expropriated without compensation, many peoples were suffered from the impact of the project for they closed their work or they incurred extra cost to re build and evacuate.

[10] Universal Declaration of Human Right 1948

According to the report by amnesty international in 2024 in Addis Ababa, Bole Lemi Kura district more than 872 peoples including 114 children and 13 elders evacuated forcefully. The report also include psychological impact on children. These things have not a better out come as dreamed by the government, rather the living standard gets worse on those who are evacuated.[11]

In this regard the government must design way out to balance the right and development plans. The peoples who are evicted or lost property or income must be compensated. Not only property loss psychological and moral damages should be compensated. Because the government has the duty to develop the country. For this purpose the constitution gives the right to administer land and natural resource. Yet the law protect property right, the rights of individuals protected internationally and national law of the constitution and expropriation proclamation are also crucial and should not be compromised.

[11] Ethiopia tribune, 'amnesty international calls to halt Ethiopian corridor development project a crisis of right vs Progress' April 14, 2025 https://ethiopiantribune.com/2025/04/amnesty-internationals-call-to-halt-ethiopias-corridor-development-project-a-crisis-of-rights-vs-progress/